

Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees
Executive Committee – Lower Octagonal Barn
Agenda
May 12, 2021 9 a.m.

Members Attending: Cliff Garstang, Ned Ruby, Peggy Sheets, Paul Vames,

Members Absent: Pamela Fox, Emmett Hanger, William Sibert, Emmett Toms, Kenneth Venable

Guests Attending: Ramona Taylor (OAG), Glenda Western (FDN)

Staff Attending: Megan Newman, Andrew Richardson, Lydia Volskis, Cliff Edwards, Joe Herget, Eric Bryan, Susan Grable

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Mrs. Peggy Sheets

Mrs. Sheets called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. and noted that as there is no quorum, approval of minutes will be tabled until the June meeting

II. Approval of February, March and April 2021 Minutes

Mrs. Sheets

Moved to June meeting.

III. Agency Report

Dr. Megan Newman

Dr. Newman said that there are a few updates since the April 23 Board of Trustees meeting. Visitation continues to trend upwards, in both general and education attendees. Many annual pass-holders have also visited. The positive shift has come over the past couple of months, and the Museum recently hosted a successful three-day home school event as well as Wool Week, with a focus on wool production and textiles. Mr. Richardson said that he works with schools to plan all types of programs and that currently half of all programs are virtual. He has also been receiving calls for school program reservations for the Summer and Fall.

She continued and gave a summary of upcoming and ongoing events and programs. Memorial Day activities, which will likely be still under covid protocols, will be spread over a three-day weekend with an emphasis on Monday. July Fourth celebrations will take place mainly on Saturday July 3rd and will feature a combination of on-site and virtual presentations. Juneteenth will be celebrated on Saturday June 19th and will be a pay-what-you-will day and is being planned in collaboration with Staunton African American leaders. Augusta Health will host a vaccine clinic on site that day in order to reach as many people as they can. The Roots Music Series, on Sunday nights in August as well as

the ongoing Lecture Series are in planning stages, and the Museum's new website is under construction.

She reported on behalf of Fiscal Director Susan Grable that revenues are positive. And that as a result of belt-tightening and focused purchasing we are "on track" for the fiscal year and that revenue and expenditures are steady. She pointed out that on the fiscal reports there appears to be a large "bump" in the General Fund; this is the capital planning funding. She also reported that the Museum is now able to restore five part-time staff – one in the Visitors center, one in maintenance and three in interpretation. Several others will follow shortly.

IV. Foundation Report

Foundation

American Frontier Culture Foundation President David Trainum reported that the Foundation is working on a listing agreement for the Dices Inn property. Mrs. Sheets noted that the property is zoned as B2 and we can add some restrictions to the list and the Foundation's attorneys will review the document. These restrictions last for twenty-five years and can be extended another ten, after which the body which sold the property must be consulted again.

V. Old Business

Mrs. Sheets/Dr. Newman

Mrs. Sheets reported that she has spoken with both Senator Emmett Hanger and Delegate John Avoli who have agreed to be co-chairs of the Capital campaign for the Crossing Gallery. She also said that the Foundation and Museum will host a Chamber of Commerce "Business After Hours" reception in June at the Octagonal Barn and noted that we all will work to ensure that it is a good event. She said that this will be a good cultivation opportunity for Board Members and also future fundraising. Mrs. Sheets continued that there are several items within the Memorandum of Understanding between the state and the Foundation which will need to be updated at the next Board meetings. These changes will confirm that the Foundation is able to use the Museum's facilities on a case-by-case basis for fundraisers and similar events.

VI. New Business

A. Invasive Species and site care

Mr. Cliff Garstang

Mr. Garstang reported that an interpreter had expressed concern about the invasive species – in particular the Bartlett pears and mountain olives – which are spreading across the front property. He said that he had spoken to Dr. Newman and Mrs. Sheets to see what the costs might be to remove or mitigate these. Mr. Edwards is also updated on the issue. Mrs. Sheets met with Roger Baber, owner of the ArborLife Company and an arborist. Mr. Baber came to the Museum and surveyed the problem areas with Mrs. Sheets. He estimated that removal of the approximately thirty Bartlett pears along the front parkway would cost \$750 per tree for a total of \$22,500. (Mrs. Sheets noted that this is nearly the cost of one fulltime interpreter). She said that as for the front

property which belongs to the Foundation, Mr. Baber recommends trimming the edges along the roadway and waiting for the impending development. On the state's side of the property, staff mow and bush-hog the areas closest to the road and the small field. Mr. Edwards has a plan for pushing back the overgrowth, but noted that there is significant cost and effort to rid ourselves of all of the invasive species, and the Museum has a small maintenance staff. Mr. Garstang wondered if there are any grant funds available for invasive species removal; Mr. Edwards said that we can investigate. Mr. Edwards said that he and Mr. Baber can create a plan for basic work and that he will update the staff on details.

Mr. Vames shared a suggestion on how to maintain the large Bradford Pear trees as they age, noting that they are lovely in Spring but very brittle.

Mr. Edwards also said that we are able to keep the main Museum site clear of invading species so as not to impact the visitor experience. Mr. Garstang said that the staff might be interested to hear about these issues as well. He will respond to the staff member who asked the initial question. Mrs. Sheets also thanked Mr. Baber for his help in removing the downed trees on site, which were the result of last week's very windy days.

B. Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity report for state

Ms. Lydia Volskis

Ms. Volskis reviewed the new One Virginia plan (Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity) which has been created to ensure that agency's practice diversity, equity and inclusivity in hiring, programming and other activities. Each agency is required to complete an initial plan by June addressing five goals; the plans will be updated each June. She reviewed the draft Museum plan and said that planner have instructed agencies that the goals set must be realistic, achievable and measurable.

C. Closed Session (if needed)

Mrs. Sheets

In the absence of a quorum to enter closed session, Mr. Vames reported some basic details. Mr. Ry Winston, of the development company reported that negotiations and progressing with a possible tenant for the fourth parcel of Phase 1 of the development. He hopes that these talks will be successfully concluded in June.

VII. Next Meeting Date

Committee

The next meeting is set for Wednesday June 23rd at 9 a.m. in the lower Octagonal Barn.

VIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Sheets

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.